Government 6353  
Field Seminar in Comparative Politics  
Fall 2016  
Wednesdays, 10:00-12:35  
Stimson 206

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This seminar is an overview of the field of comparative politics targeted towards Ph.D. students in the Government department. This course introduces students to classic works as well as recent contributions that build upon those works. Readings draw from leading theoretical approaches—including structural, institutional, rational choice, and cultural perspectives—and cover a broad range of substantive topics, such as regime types, democratization, states and civil society, political economy, violence, participation, and representation. Students from other programs may register only with the permission of the instructor. There are no prerequisites for the course.

The reading load for this course varies by week, but averages six to seven articles/chapters or approximately three hundred pages per week. Assigned readings are marked with an asterisk (*). Students are expected to complete all of the required readings before each class.

I have listed additional background reading to identify important works that we will not be able to cover during our course. These lists for each week are long. You will certainly not be able to complete them all, and you should not try. However, you should consider the syllabus as a whole to reflect a broad survey of some of the major questions and topics in the field of comparative politics. It is still incomplete, in ways that we will discuss at length in class. But a student interested in pursuing research on, say, the state, or political identity, or the political economy of advanced industrial democracies, should expect to be familiar with the basic concepts, debates, and approaches found in the recommended readings sections for that particular week.

The following books are available for purchase at the Cornell bookstore. Copies are also available at the Olin Library reserve desk.

Remaining readings are drawn from a mix of books and journal articles. The assigned readings are available online at the Blackboard course site, which may be accessed at http://blackboard.cornell.edu. The course ID is 7024_2016FA. Readings are found under the Readings tab on the left-hand navigation panel.

There are three requirements for this course:

1. **Active and thoughtful class participation.** All students are expected to participate actively and regularly in discussions. In addition, two times during the semester, students will serve as discussion leaders. Discussion leaders will write a short, two-page critical review of the weekly readings and circulate it in advance to other members of the class in order to identify key issues for classroom discussion.

2. **Critical response essays.** Throughout the course of the semester, each student is responsible for writing five (5) short response papers that integrate and critically evaluate each week’s required readings. These can be done for any week except for weeks in which the student is the discussion leader.

3. **Final exam.** A 48 hour take home written exam comprised of a choice of several essay questions. The date of the exam will be announced early in the semester.

I will not grant incompletes in this class except as a consequence of extraordinary personal circumstances. Late work will be penalized.

To facilitate learning and group engagement, phones, tablets, laptops, and other electronic devices are not permitted in our seminar. You should therefore plan ahead by bringing hard copies of the readings if you need them for your reference. If you have a medical condition that requires special accommodation for personal electronic devices, please see me at the end of our first course meeting.

**Course Plan (assigned readings with *):**

**Week 1 (Aug. 24): Introduction: Classics**


**Week 2 (August 31) The Science of Comparative Politics?**


**Recommended**


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**Week 3 (September 7): States and State Formation**


**Recommended**


Joel Migdal. “Researching the State,” in Lichbach and Zuckerman, eds. *Comparative Politics*.


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**Week 4 (September 14): Institutions**


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Week 5 (September 21): Regimes I: Concepts


*Barbara Geddes. 1999. “What Do We Know about Democratization After Twenty Years?” Annual Review of Political Science 2, 115-144.


Recommended


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**Week 6 (September 28): Regimes II: Origins**


Recommended


**Week 7 (October 5): Regimes III: Survival and Transitions**

*Steven Levitsky and Lucan Way. 2010. *Competitive Authoritarianism: Hybrid Regimes after the Cold War*. Ch. 1 & 2 plus 3 or 4 and 5, 6, or 7.*


**Recommended**


Week 8 (October 12): Political Economy of Development


**Recommended**


**Week 9 (October 19): Social Movements, Collective Action, and Contentious Politics**


**Recommended**

Doug McAdam, John D. McCarthy, and Mayer N. Zald (eds.). 1996. Comparative Perspectives on Social Movements: Political Opportunities, Mobilizing Structures, and Cultural Framings. New York: Cambridge University Press.


**Week 10 (October 26): Identity**


**Recommended**


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**Week 11 (November 2): Civil War and Violence**


*Elisabeth Jean Wood. 2003. *Insurgent Collective Action and Civil War in El Salvador,* Ch. 1, 2, 4, 7, 8.*


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*Recommended*


**Week 12 (November 9): Voters, Parties, and Elections**


**Recommended**


Angus Campbell, Philip Converse, Warren Miller, and Donald E. Stokes. 1966. Elections and the Political Order.


**Week 13 (November 16): Accountability, Representation, and Governance**


**Recommended**


Daniel Kaufmann and Aart Kraay. 2008. “Governance Indicators: Where Are We and Where Should We Be Going?” World Bank Research Observer.


Alexis de Tocqueville. 1840. *Democracy in America*.


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**Week 14 (November 30): Political Economy of Advanced Industrial Democracies**


**Recommended**


